

KICKSHAWS

FAITH ECKLER

Morristown, New Jersey

Kickshaws is currently being assembled by a series of guest editors. All contributions should be sent to the editor in Morristown, New Jersey.

The Logologist Travels

They say that travel is broadening. In addition to frequently increasing one's girth, it also affords an opportunity to pick up all sorts of logological tidbits. A selection of these from a recent trip include the New Jersey license plate HRIC. There seems to be no explanation for this save the possibility that the learned owner found his first name already pre-empted by some one else's vanity plate and substituted the Greek eta (H) for E. A clever fellow, that! Then there was the gas station owner in Butler, New Jersey with the near-tautonymic surname of OBELDOBEL. Almost made me want to buy his gas.

Several years ago we exhaustively researched punning names for hairdressing establishments, and Word Ways readers are still sending us their favorites. The fad is rapidly spreading to other varieties of merchandise. Seen on Cape Cod: CLOTHES ENCOUNTER on a dress shop, and KITCHEN LITTLE selling small household appliances. A recent magazine ad for riding attire comes from the firm L'UNDER BRITCHES.

While waiting for breakfast one morning in New Paltz, New York we spied the following offering on a jukebox: ROMANCE BEYOND THE ALPHABET, by The Culture Club. I've never heard it played by my local disc jockey, but it ought to be the love song of logologists the world round. And while passing the evening in a motel I noted an ad in Time magazine which gave me pause. Soliciting funds for a New York Catholic charity, it listed among its good works HOSTILES FOR THE RETARDED. I know people who aren't especially fond of the retarded, but I didn't know anybody actually hated them. This raises an interesting question: Does a magazine have the right and/or responsibility to proofread or edit ad copy submitted to them?

Finally, there's a Holiday Inn in Connecticut which goes in for Victorian speakeasy decor. Its oversize menu purports to be several pages from a penny-dreadful type novel of the period. In several chapters it recounts some melodramatic tale which proved to be too long to read while waiting for the waitress to return (the service was surprisingly quick), but my eye was caught by the

names of the two villains of the piece, VICTOR W. ETAOINE and LESLIE SHRDLU. As far as I could tell, despite this promising start there was no wordplay involved in the story. I could have wished, however, that the characters had been named NATE ETAOINE and RUSS L. SHRDLU, or perhaps in the Bonnie and Clyde tradition it should have been ANITA ETAOINE. And why that extra E?

Here's Mud in Your Eye

Preparatory to another recent trip, I tried to acquire some historical background on the country I would visit. In H. V. Morton's book In Search of Scotland (Dodd, Mead & Co.) I learned of a 1745 toast of the Jacobite supporters of James VIII of Scotland and Bonnie Prince Charlie. In order to conceal their political sentiments from the ubiquitous spies who might betray them, they would simply recite the alphabet awhile hoisting their glasses of whisky (Scottish spelling), and this would be understood to mean:

A Blessed Change / Damn Every Foreigner
Get Home, Jemmy / Keep Loyal Ministers
No Oppressive Parliaments / Quickly Return Stuart
Tuch Up Whelps [Guelphs] / eXert Your Zeal

The Good Book

One of the ancillary activities of any of our vacation trips is the search for more used word books to add to the editor's rapidly expanding collection. Armed with a listing of all the antiquarian book dealers in the area, we've spent many rainy days rummaging through dusty shelves looking for pay dirt. One recent find was Curiosities of the Bible, published in 1877. Its author is identified only as "a New York Sunday School Superintendant," although the Preface is signed with the initials T.B.E. Perhaps only coincidentally, the publisher is E. B. Treat, the same initials reversed. Buried near the end of the book are some curious (and totally useless) facts supposedly discovered by a convict sentenced to a long term of solitary confinement:

- * The Bible (King James Version) contains 3,586,489 letters, 773,692 words, 31,173 verses, 1,189 chapters and 66 books
- * The word and occurs 46,277 times
- * The 21st verse of Ezra 7 contains all the letters of the alphabet except J
- * Each verse of Psalm 136 ends with the same word

and more in the same vein. Too bad the energetic convict couldn't have applied himself to more constructive wordplay.

The book's first hundred pages contain what the author calls Prize Questions designed to encourage young people to read the Bible in search of the answers. Most of these are singularly unedifying, such as "What is the longest word in the Bible?" (Mahershalal-hash-baz, Isaiah 8:1,4) or "What is the name of the only person mentioned in the Bible whose name commences with the letter Q?" (Quartus, Romans 16:23). It is hard to see how answering questions such as these would increase one's knowledge of Biblical his-

tory or deepen one's faith, but the author clearly intended that this kind of exercise would make his students "skilled in the interpretation of that Divine Book and enjoy its spiritual illumination." It reminds me of my own Sunday School days when a major competition was conducted in which all the little girls and boys were each to compile a listing of all the Bible verses beginning with the letter R. The only thing I remember about the exercise is that I won, but I can't believe I'm a better person for having done so.

Following this section is one hundred pages of so-called Scripture Enigmas (word puzzles), which was the reason we bought the book. Although the author designates most of these as enigmas, they include what the National Puzzlers' League calls numericals, rebuses, acrostics (both single and double), charades, and anagrams. Four puzzles are designated anagrams, but in fact they do not differ from the others and are simply numericals.

A sample of the puzzles follows. Their interest lies mainly in the light they throw on the historical development of puzzling. Don't expect them to enhance your life. Answers are given in Answers and Solutions.

NUMERICAL

My fourteen letters will a name unfold,
In vision imagined by a head of gold.
You must not guess the characters to tell,
But in the sacred pages search and spell.
First find the following names, the initials take,
And these combined the monarch's title make.

1. Find numbers one, seven, eight, thirteen and three,
And one who died for sacrilege you see.
2. Find two, twelve, fourteen, seven - a scribe is found
Who raised a fallen city from the ground.
3. Three, thirteen, fourteen, four, five, six denote
A scribe who twice the prophets warning wrote.
4. Four, twelve, eleven, seven and six, and such
His name who died for one unlawful touch.
5. Five, sixteen, fourteen, four, and three, will bring,
A wondrous creature with an outspread wing.
6. Find six, ten, three, two, fourteen, you shall view
A man whose wife the weary Sisera slew.
7. Find seven, three, nine, ten, fourteen, and recall
The great war captain of the house of Saul.
8. Eight, four, fourteen, and seven - its plain extends
Where nations to a golden image bend.
9. Nine, ten, seven, six reveal, the utmost bound,
The eastern limit of Zebulun's ground.
10. Ten, eight, two, nine - behold a garden fair!
And lo, a matchless couple dwelling there.
11. Eleven, two, fourteen, ten and eight - appears,
Israel's last journey in the forty years.
12. Twelve, thirteen, three, four, eight - you apprehend
The son of Nathan, and a wise king's friend.

13. Find thirteen, twelve, eleven, seven, six, and tell
The utmost border where the Avims dwell.
14. Fourteen, two, four – behold the patriarch's name,
The son of Peleg, in the line of Shem.

ACROSTIC

1. Think of a precious sense in man?
2. Its duplex organs think of them?
3. What most befits the weary think?
4. And into what the wicked sink?
5. Think what will melt with fervent heat?
6. What pierced the Saviour's hands and feet?
7. What were his fellow sufferers tell?
And mark the initial letters well.
These show who told the earliest lie,
And made our tempted parents die.

REBUS

Five hundred begins it; five hundred ends it;
And five in the middle is seen;
The first of all letters, the first of all numbers,
Have taken their stations between;
And if you correctly this medley can spell,
The name of an ancient king then will it tell.

TRANSPOSAL

The letters in the answers to the following will, if rightly placed,
form the name of a learned teacher:

1. One of the encampments of the Israelites where there were wells
of water.
2. A man who conspired against Abimelech, and was thrust out
from the city where he had dwelt.

CHARADE

In many a bosom fondly nursed,
A fiery serpent is my FIRST:
When Jesus came for us to die,
He crushed this deadly enemy.
My SECOND is a city's name,
Where Israel's host was put to shame,
Because my FIRST still unrevealed,
Was lurking in their camp concealed.
Upon my WHOLE, pronounced by Heaven,
The knowledge of my FIRST was given.
The chosen people gathered round,
And trembled at the dreadful sound.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC

1. A name, the symbol of mere worldly gain;
To love it and love God – the attempt is vain.
2. A vale Tobiah sought, with feigned alarm,
To entrap there Nehemiah to his harm.
3. A plain where building projects of proud aim,

By heaven confounded soon was brought to shame.

4. A word of Christ, which ears fast chained unbound.

5. For incense, jewels, gold, a land renowned.

The initials of these words read downward and the finals read upward and you have the names of two brothers.

Last Will and Testament

Professor Zebedee Throckmorton was dead. The bustle and confusion of his funeral had tended to obscure that fact from his children, but now, seated in the lawyer's office, Jim and Sarah were at last able to face the reality that their father was thoroughly and finally gone.

He had been a distinguished Biblical scholar, occupying the chair of Scripture at Southeastern Theological Seminary, and in his spare time a devotee of word games. He would be sorely missed in the intellectual community, but in passing he had left a rather large estate. He had never disclosed to his children how he would dispose of his wealth, and despite their grief they were eager to learn of their inheritance.

Mr. Tilney, the solicitor, cleared his throat, bringing Jim and Sarah back to the matter at hand: the reading of the will. "It is my duty to inform you," he said, "that your father has made a most unusual will. I tried to dissuade him when he came to consult me, but he was adamant and I thus had no choice but to follow his wishes. Incidentally, I have checked with Judge Parker, and he tells me that, while unusual, the will is perfectly legal and will stand up in court. Shall we proceed?"

With sidelong glances at one another, the two young people signaled that the proceedings should begin.

After a number of testamentary dispositions to faithful servants, and a bequest of half a million dollars to endow a chair in Ancient Ugarit at the Seminary, the lawyer got to what was to be the important part. "I give and bequeath," he read, "the remainder of my estate to one of my two children whom I shall not name, but who will learn of my intentions by identifying in strict order five famous Biblical pairs from the clues given herewith: Dance, Sacrifice, Tablets, Prophets, Hair."

The potential inheritors seated opposite the lawyer appeared baffled at first, but they soon began naming Biblical pairs: Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, Ruth and Naomi. Slowly the room became silent as they tried to solve the puzzle set by their aged progenitor. At length, they both sprang to their feet with a look of unalloyed joy and cried "Eureka! It is I!"

In consternation Mr. Tilney looked from one to the other. "Professor Throckmorton assured me there was only one unique solution to this puzzle," he said, but then shuffling through the papers on his desk he found a sealed envelope addressed in the old professor's hand. Opening the envelope, he withdrew a single sheet

of paper on which was written these words: "Only one of my children is my legitimate offspring. The other was the result of a tumble in the hay - a real mix-up in which I should never have participated. Neither of them knows this fact, but it is to my legitimate child that my estate should go."

Upon hearing this, one of the children beamed with joy, and the other implored Mr. Tilney to institute proceedings to break the will. Who inherited, and why?

Sly Fox

This game was proposed by a disc jockey on New York's radio station WNEW, although it may have had an earlier genesis. Take a familiar two-word phrase and think up as many rhyming phrases as you can with plausible definitions. To show you what we mean, here are some of the offerings dreamed up and phoned in by listeners for the phrase in the title:

Purchase trusses	Buy jocks
Tall piers	High docks
Find car trouble	Spy knocks
White wines	Dry hocks
Three German hose	Drei socks
Bashful Star Trekkers	Shy Spocks
Lively roosters	Spry cocks
Shed false tears	Cry crocs
CIA laughter	Spy yocks
Purchase real estate	Buy blocks
Transport fish	Fly lox
Unearth boulders	Pry rocks
Entertain physicians	Ply docs

Get the point? O.K., then, try your hand at the following definitions with the additional challenge of discovering the base phrase:

Depressed deer
 Father bird
 Severe hurricane
 Tartan exhibition
 Angry enemy
 Was unhappy
 Jubilant boy-friend
 Dressed expert

Charge It

Did you see the AP story eighteen months ago about all the mistaken versions of play titles heard by a salesman at a half-price ticket operation in Times Square? According to John Moon there was that Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "The Pirates of Pan-Am," or the Broadway hit "Best Little Warehouse." Then there are the blends of two titles - Amadeus and Othello become "Amathello." But his favorite was "Avisa," apparently the work of a theatre fan who wanted to see "Evita" and intended to use his credit card.

Keep It Short

Every academician will recognize the problem: whether to rush into print with preliminary results and risk being known as a sloppy researcher, or to delay until exhaustive research has been completed and somebody else has published first. Three or four years ago, I asked myself one day, "Is there any of the 676 bigrams which has not been used as an abbreviation?" I set about finding out.

I began by looking at Webster's Third, and after painstakingly searching its pages, I found that I could tick off 455 of the possibles. Then my interest waned and I filed the material away in my Kickshaws file until I started to work on this column. I then dusted it off and tried to plug the rest of the holes. Using a couple of other standard dictionaries, plus Dr. John Paxton's Dictionary of Abbreviations (1974) I succeeded in reducing the number of blanks to 16 which I intended to present to Word Ways readers as a challenge to fill. At that point the editor reminded me that Ed Wolpow had, in the November 1982 issue of Word Ways, presented his finding that all but six bigrams were represented in New Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations (1981). I'd been scooped!

Interestingly, I had found instances of the use of four of Wolpow's unknowns: XG, YX, YZ and ZX (all motor vehicle registration codes), but we agreed that YQ and ZQ were still available for use. How about an organization of Young Quakers, or perhaps some eminent neurologist would like to study the Zygomatic Quotient.

Actually, I had been troubled about the quality of some of the abbreviations I had obtained from Paxton. His listing included some strange sources, among them the British and International Motor Vehicle Registration Codes, and International Civil Aircraft Markings, both of which are perhaps assigned according to some logical formula, but which are meaningless unless you know the code. They were, in my judgment, not true abbreviations. I began to realize that I had been asking myself the wrong question; what I was looking for was the use of all possible bigrams as initialisms.

The work consulted by Wolpow distinguishes abbreviations and initialisms thus:

An **abbreviation** is a shortened form of a word (as APR = April)

An **initialism** is composed of the initial letters or parts of a compound term (as PO = Post Office)

Alphabetic symbols use letters which do not always correspond to the words they represent (as WT = Three-Conductor Cables)

With these distinctions in mind, I decided to recheck my listing to see how many were truly initialisms (or near-misses, as AX = Attack eXperimental). I found that, in addition to the six holes identified by Wolpow, twenty more bigrams could only be filled with abbreviations or alphabetic symbols. If you're starting a new organization, choose your name carefully and quickly; these openings are sure to be filled by the time the next edition of New Acro-

nyms comes out: GX, HY, JX, KX, LX, OX, OZ, QX, QZ, UX, UZ, XJ, XX, XY, XZ, YI, YJ, YV, ZY.

Making a Short Story Longer

When I finished writing the preceding piece, I found I had done a fair amount of research, and I wondered what possible use I could make of it. Surely I ought to be able to draw some significant conclusion. It occurred to me to try to document the suspicion that the use of initialisms has dramatically increased in recent years.

To test this hypothesis it would be necessary to compare apples and applies (not apples and oranges) and so I asked, "How many of the 676 spaces could I fill using only Webster's Second as compared with the number that could be filled using Webster's Third?" This required still more research, but this was made easy by the fact that Webster's Second lists all abbreviations in a separate section, while Webster's Third sprinkles them through the dictionary.

I found that using Webster's Second, 363 letter-pairs could be checked off, while Webster's Third gave me 455. No real surprise there. What did surprise me, however, was the fact that 22 letter-pairs constituted initialisms in Webster's Second but not Third. I list them below because they point up one of the differences between the two dictionaries: Webster's Second relies much more heavily on ecclesiastical terms, geographic designations, British (including Colonial) terms, and University degrees. It was also interesting to note that most initialisms in Webster's Second were written with periods (I accepted a handful that were written with a slash or a dash, as A/W or U-Y), while most in Webster's Third were written without periods.

BI	British India
CZ	Canal Zone
DZ	Doctor of Zoology
EL	Epworth League
FE	Flemish Ells, Forest Engineer
FI	Falkland Islands
GF	Grand Fleet, Grazing Farm (Queensland)
IX	Iesus Christos
JR	Jacobus Rex
KH	Knights of Hanover
KL	Knights of Leopold
KN	Know-Nothing
KG	Knight of the Garter
KR	King's Rook
LU	Liberal Unionist
QR	Queen's Rook, Quarry Reserve (Australia)
UN	United Brethren, Upper Bench
UK	United Kingdom
UX	Uranium X (U-X)

UY	Uranium Y (U-Y)
YA	York-Antwerp Rules (Marine Ins.)
YW	Young Women's Christian Association

Tune That Name

In May 1974, R. Robinson Rowe introduced **Word Ways** readers to the concept of combining the names of the musical syllables (UT or DO, RE, MI, FA, SOL, LA, SI or TI) to spell words by writing the appropriate music. It was an intriguing concept, but I recently discovered that Mr. Rowe had been scooped by at least five centuries.

I was listening to a recording of the "Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae" by Josquin des Pres (1450-1521) and reading the liner notes. After a discussion of the theory of early polyphonic choral writing in which a cantus firmus, or traditional chant, forms the leading theme of the work, the commentator observed that in this instance the title of the work provided the cantus firmus. "If we take the successive syllables, Her-cu-les dux Fer-ra-ri-e, and replace them with the solmisation syllables that have the same vowels, RE, UT, RE, UT, RE, FA, MI, RE (or D C D C D F E D) we have the **cantus firmus**." This struck me as pretty ingenious for an old boy composing more than 500 years ago.

The unfamiliar word **solmisation** in the previous quotation sent me to the dictionary and from there to the encyclopedia to find the even more unfamiliar word **solfeggio**. Here I learned all about Guido, an eleventh-century monk who devised a six-note hexachord system of musical notation replacing the older Greek tetrachord system. In casting about for names for the notes, he noticed that in an ancient hymn for the festival of St. John the Baptist, the notes on which the successive phrases began were identical in order with the sounds of the hexachord. He therefore adopted these syllables as names to represent the degrees of the new scale, thus:

UT queant laxis REsonare fibris
 MIra gestorum FAMuli tuorum
 SOLve polluti LABii reatum
 Sancte Ioannes

A medieval mnemonic, as it were! When, in the seventeenth century the octave was completed by a seventh note, the syllable SI, formed from the initials of Sancte Ioannes was added, and by this time DO had replaced UT in all but crossword puzzles as more easily pronounceable.

Playing with musical notes as letters has been done by a number of composers, including J. S. Bach. In Germany, what we call B they call H, and what we call B-flat they call B. So Bach worked the melody B-flat, A, C, B into one of his pieces - the final Contrapunctus in his Art of the Fugue - where it is the concluding theme.

It Isn't in the History Books

Plutonium Pluvius Maximus, the Roman Governor of Nova Caesarea, was perturbed. Traffic safety on the viae of his province was going ab malo ad pessimum. Too many chariots were being driven without proper maintenance, and the number of drunken and reckless charioteers was increasing daily. Traffic accidents abounded. The magistratus were not issuing enough summonses because there was no way to identify the offending vehicles. Summoning his nephew, Pluvius Catulus et Canis, Max announced, "I am making you Director of the Department of Wheeled Vehicles. Now what do you suggest that we do?"

Scratching his head, the canny Cat thought for a minute and then replied, "Ave, Uncle Max; I believe I have a solution. We need license plates."

"What are those?" his uncle asked, for this was a yet-unknown phenomenon.

"To the back of each chariot we will attach a large marble slab on which our stone cutters will incise a three-character numeral. Perhaps the weight of the slab will reduce the chariot's speed, and in any event we will have a way of identifying the offending vehicles."

Plutonium Pluvius Maximus thought this was a splendid idea and set the Carthaginian servi to work incising slabs of Carrara marble. Fortunately the number of chariots in Nova Caesarea was quite small, because when all the license plates were ready, it was discovered that there were only 91 that could be made using only three Roman numerals.

Driving down the road one day and musing on this little-known fact of ancient history, I thought about the license plates of New Jersey which use three letters and three numbers. How likely was it that I could spot a plate whose letters, read as Roman numerals, would equal the accompanying three-digit number?

There are 15,818,400 ways you can permute three letters and the numbers from 100 to 999. Admittedly New Jersey doesn't use all the possible three-letter combinations because some produce offensive or obscene words, but let us assume that all letters are used. Writing down all the three-digit numbers that can be made from the common Roman numerals (I, V, X, L, C, D, M), I found that there are only 42! Therefore, all things being equal (which they never are), your chance of finding a match is 1:376,330. The next time you are taking a trip through the fair state of Nova Caesarea and are tired of some of the other license plate games, try looking for one of these 42 plates. The editor would be interested in knowing if anyone actually finds one. To aid in your search, a list of the possibles follows. Happy hunting!

CII 102	CIX 109	CXX 120	CLV 155	CCI 201	CCL 250
CIV 104	CXI 111	CXL 140	CLX 160	CCV 205	CCC 300
CVI 106	CXV 115	CLI 151	CXC 190	CCX 210	CDI 401

CDV 405	DIV 504	DXV 515	DLV 555	DCV 605	CMI 901
CDX 410	DVI 506	DXX 520	DLX 560	DCX 610	CMV 905
CDL 450	DIX 509	DXL 540	DXC 590	DCL 650	CMX 910
DII 502	DXI 511	DLI 551	DCI 601	DCC 700	CML 950

It should be observed that New Jersey plates either have the letters first and then the three numbers, or else the other way around. There are thus 84 qualifying plates. However, it is also true that the figure of 15,818,400 should be doubled, so the odds remain the same.

Here We Go Again!

As noted earlier, we just can't seem to stop noting down examples of punning store names. We have speculated as to what kind of establishment best lends itself to this kind of wordplay. Pet (and pet grooming) shops and clothing boutiques both seem promising, but a quick look at a half-dozen telephone directories reveals that there is room for a great deal of creativity in either field.

In the pet line, there is a great deal of alliteration: Pet Palace, Poodle Parlor, Pioneer Pet Care, Preppy Pup to name just a few. Then there are others which are cute, but exhibit a rather low level of wordplay: Let's Pet (Chicago), Puppy Luv (Chicago), Animal Farm (Minneapolis), and Going to the Dogs (Jackson, N.J.). A few approach the standards of "Hair-It-Is": Pet Pourri (Rockaway, N.J.), Pride & Groom (Freehold, N.J.), Pet Stop (Basking Ridge, N.J.), Woof & Purr Inn (Flanders, N.J.), Tanks-Alot (a fish store in Red Bank, N.J.), and the Pet Set (Annandale, Va.).

Clothing stores show less imagination. The best of our limited survey were: The Jeaneration Gap (Reston, Va.), Gal-Array (Cedar Knolls, N.J.), The Best Little Wearhouse in Philly (Philadelphia, Pa.) and the near-palindromic Madam Adams Shop for Women (New Providence, N.J.). One hopes the proprietress is really named Adams.

I suggest that if you are going to start making a collection of punning store names the best place to look is telephone directories of upscale suburban communities where the fad seems to be more prevalent than in the big cities.